GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:275
ANSWERED ON:16.03.2016
MoU with UK
Gavit Dr. Heena Vijaykumar;Gupta Shri Sudheer

Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) Whether India and UK have signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for establishment of a joint India-UK collaboration programme in crop science;

(b) If so, the details thereof and the aim of the agreement;

(c) The manner in which both the countries are likely to be benefited therefrom; and

(d) The time by which the agreement is likely to be implemented?

Answer

MINISTER OF SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY AND EARTH SCIENCES

(DR. HARSH VARDHAN)

(a), (b), (c) & (d) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT IN RESPECT OF LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. *275 TO BE ANSWERED ON 16/03/2016 REGARDING "MoU WITH UK"

(a) Yes, Madam, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been signed between Department of Biotechnology (DBT), Ministry of Science & Technology and a consortium of UK universities and institutions led by Cambridge University, UK and Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC), Govt. Of UK. The other UK institutions and universities partners are: National Institute of Agricultural Botany (NIAB), John Innes Centre (JIC), Rothamsted and University of East Anglia (UEA).

(b) The details of the MoU is as per the MoU at Annexure-I and the aim of the agreement is to address the following objectives:

- the fundamental plant science underpinning yield enhancement and agronomy, disease resistance and drought resistance

- crop pre-breeding

- the translation of fundamental research into sustainable agriculture and extension services

- developing a mechanism for the establishment of a joint Indo-UK Plant Science Centre in India

(c) This collaboration will build on the close links already established between leading researchers in the United Kingdom and India. On the foundation of the established collaboration, this partnership in crop science will create opportunities for leading experts in the UK and India to come together to tackle global challenges in the areas of food security, crop science and biotechnology.

The agreement foresees joint projects focusing on the fundamental science underpinning yield enhancement, disease resistance and drought resistance; research into crop re-breeding; and the translation of fundamental research into sustainable agriculture practice. It also contemplates the establishment of a joint Indo-UK Plant Science Centre in India

The collaboration also foresees capacity building in terms of training of human resource on both sides, addressing problems of farmers and providing viable scientific solutions. This platform will provide an understanding of the best farming practices of both India and UK.

(d) The agreement will be implemented with immediate effect with the following activities already defined:

(i) Leadership Training Programme for around 40 mid-career women scientists to visit the UK this year for a 5 day programme based in all the five UK partnering universities and institutes.

(ii) A subisidiary activity would undertake a scoping study to explore the possibility of developing a demonstration farm model (an "Innovation Farm"), in partnership with Krishi Vigyan Kendras. These could be developed at several sites across India to allow farmers, especially women farmers, to receive training and advice on the latest agronomic practices and improved varieties, focusing on local climatic conditions and their associated key dietary staples.

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